DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 114 CG 026 144

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TITLE Music as a Treatment Channel of Adolescent Destructivity.
PUB DATE [94]
NOTE 22p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Counseling; Counselors; Delinquency; *Institutionalized Persons; *Music Therapy; *Self Destructive Behavior; Therapy; Violence; Youth Problems

ABSTRACT

A young person showing strong destructive symptoms often has too much hatred toward adults, other authorities, and society for the "voice of reason" to penetrate or reach some fixed point in his or her psyche. Music, however, activates emotions raising problems of the real field of life to be dealt with in symbolic form. This paper discusses the theory and practice of music therapy in the treatment of institutionalized adolescents. Cognitive developmental psychology and the theories of Piaget, Freud, and Lewin are examined. Sections are: "Is Music an Early Form of Thinking?"; "Visions of Despair in the Background of Destructive Adolescents"; "Does Teenage Music Help in the Treatment of Destructivity?"; "Music in the Field of Life"; "Can Music Solve Crises in Real Life?"; and "The Opportunities of Music in Community Work." Music is seen as a treatment modality which may reach emotionally disturbed teenagers and traumatized individuals. (JBJ)

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ED 391 114

MUSIC AS A TREATMENT CHANNEL OF ADOLESCENT DESTRUCTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the theory, and practice, of music therapy in the treatment of institutionalized adolescents. Music is seen as a treatment modality which may reach emotionally disturbed teenagers and traumatized individuals.

Both authors have worked for over twenty years in residential treatment facilities for juvenile delinquents, emotionally disturbed adolescents, and dependent/neglected children. The first author as a music therapist, the second in various capacities as counselor, coach, teacher, and social worker. Based on this time, the hopeless visions shadowing these young people's lives have become far too familiar. These long institutionalized reformatory schoolboys and adolescents have become subjects of "institutional child abuse " (Shaughnessy, 1984) and their lives have become like a " cold beloved " which has always demanded a lot, but which has offered little in return.

The life problems of these often inappropriately institutionalized boys and girls, treated in reformatories and residential treatment facilities, often canalize themselves through destructive behavior. Teachers, social workers, classroom educators and counselors are often quite impotent and helpless in dealing with these adolescents. Their well meaning principles of life often quite sadly fall on "deaf ears" .

A young person showing strong destructive symptoms often has too much hatred toward adults, and other authorities and society for the " voice of reason" to penetrate or reach some fixed point in his or her psyche.

Music, however, activates emotions raising problems of the real field of life to be dealt with in a symbolic form.

Music gives birth to new observational perspectives because it seems to "bring apart" difficult and traumatic events in the field of life to such a symbolic distance that observing and solving these problems is possible.

IS MUSIC AN EARLY FORM OF THINKING ?

An earlier article presented a theory that the origin of music is both in physiological and psychic " internal tensions " developed in man, which are constantly seeking their expression and an outburst channel through music.

According to this theory, music isn't in fact "only music" but a consequence of the internal "musical thinking " whose goal is to dissolve different physiological, non lingual, non narrative and this unconscious "pressures" . As far as we can accept the theory concerning the origin of music here (for instance anchored in music therapy or music interest) the psychic problems and conflicts " relieving " , "calming" and "balancing" character of music no longer seems so enigmatic (see Lehtonen 1986 a and 1988)

According to composer Igor Stravinski (1973) music is nothing but a series of tensions which struggle towards their resolution. Known as quite a cynic, Stravinski's statement may be an indication of a genius's arrogance towards intellectual observation of music. On the other hand, however, the statement contains a general and simple theory about the effects of music. The tensions mentioned by Stravinsky also get new interest when they are examined

in relation to a newborn baby's archaic world, which according to modern cognitive study consists of rhythmic variation of different tensions and explosions.

Lately, the considerably developed cognitive developmental psychology has also expanded to the detailed observation of man's earliest stages of development, which has also given further illumination to the observation of musical experience.

Daniel Stern (1985) examines a newborn baby's experiential world in his excellent book "The Interpersonal World of the Infant" . Stern notes that the baby is able already in his or her early developmental stages, to identify similar configurations of different sensations to form some kind of amodal abstractions which also abound in musical language.

More than traditional "categorical" affects, (sorrow, fear, shame, hatred) the baby's experience world is dominated by so-called " vital affects " (silent, strong accelerating explosive, soft and so on) which are like musical presentation notes. According to Stern, the basic forms of identity experience don't reflect their position and quality, but they are experiences starting up "survival " functions (that music can also arouse).

It seems that the more developmental psychology is able to explain the early stages of individual development, and the baby's experiential world, the more we can also

understand musical experiences with their essential features anchored in that world and the psychic and physical and psychological reactions connected with music.

A similar competition between permanence and tension imbalance and balance, chaos and structure also prevails in the field of life experienced by an individual.

Piaget , Freud, and also Lewin (1952) describe life as a balance oriented process whereby constantly growing and bursting pressures form a continuous challenge to thinking in order to change an individual's cognitive structures and to reorganize them. From this standpoint, it is thinking and it's obstacles that rise into a decisive position in an individual's field of life.

Music activates emotions raising problems of the real field of life to be dealt with in a symbolic form. Music gives birth to new observational perspectives, because it seems to "bring apart" difficult and traumatic events of life space to such a symbolic distance that their observation and solution are possible.

In this respect, music forms an interesting "self-reflection" passage : an opportunity to "express and listen" in music, one's own thoughts and feelings (also without conscious or lingual form). Also, the expression of psychic chaos without shape of control and treatment in music is fully possible. As for man being in psychic and social

distress, the introduction of the process naturally means growing possibilities to a deeper realization of him/her self and his/her environment.

At the same time, it also forms a passage to an ever-increasing realization and control in one's own thinking and different shades and experience in the formation of meaning. The emotionally and physically meaningful space anchoring profoundly in music thus greatly reminds us of a little child's non discursive and non verbal way of thinking; a wholistic way of perceiving the world as some sort of emotional sensations, images and visions. The psychic, life calming, balancing and reconstructive aspect of music has not been sufficiently noticed (for instance, in music education which has predominantly considered important only various music presentations). Neither have several discussions among adults concerning for instance, the harmfulness of violent teenage music been able by any means to reflect psyche-reforming questions by music. We shall now examine the use of music in the treatment of destructive adolescents.

VISIONS OF DESPAIR IN THE BACKGROUND OF DESTRUCTIVE ADOLESCENTS

What is often shocking in destructive or self destructive behavior is expressly its despair, undeveloped targets and

especially its unconscious and partly conscious goal : death.

Workers who have often powerlessly followed from aside young people stuck in a criminal and intoxication circle, have to ask themselves irresolutely if there reallly is nt anything to be done.

When working as therapists, the writers have often had to ask themselves what kind of internal life does a 14 year old boy lead, who steals and breaks up some ten cars or drugs him or herself unconscious during the weekend. What kind of home and social history has he or she had ?

And why does a young person whose life should be only at the beginning, act as if it in fact was turning toward it's end?

Social workers and close educators know the answers to the questions concerning these young people's background and social history far too well. They can be fully answered with the words of an old blues song " troubles, troubles, troubles". In the background of destructively behaving young people, there are all kinds of various and crushing problems,(in front of which the young ones have fallen into much too early).

In the senior author's connection with the practice of music therapy, he has constantly come across also the question of "worthlessness". The issue of why juvenile delinquents, criminally insane teenagers and self

destructive, self defeating individuals have no values, which leaves social workers and those involved in residential treatment often incredulous.

The answer is often just as simple : unworthiness is due to the fact that these young people experience that they themselves have no "value" in their own eyes or in anybody else's eyes. On the other hand, you can do anything with a worthless life. You can as well destroy it with dissolvents and other intoxicants as well as use it also for destruction or crimes endangering fellow people's lives.

There is often at the background the influence of a deeply rooted idea in the insignificance and uselessness of one's own life. Being guilty of destructive acts is however, at the same time, also a very strong and desperate call for help, which unfortunately often gets a paradoxical treatment. Instead of making a parliamentary inquiry (as happened recently in Finland) about the fact why we have so many completely unhappy young people, who because of their psychic distress and restlessness have to symptomize greatly destructively and crimninally, we demand the minimum age limit of penal responsibility to be reduced.

The insignificance of one's own life is to be seen above all as indifference concerning values and norms, which often quite directly repeats the young person's own background : "Because nobody has cared about me, I don't have to care about anything either"

The authors do not agree with the experts who emphasize the point that these criminal minors don't understand the meaning of their acts. At least those young people who the authors have met in therapeutic situations have realized the destructive and criminal meaning of their acts. In the background there have been more profound questions connected with the meaning and rationality of the "existence" itself as well as the deep despair influencing at the background of the problems, hopelessness and the aspiration to final psychic "peace" through self destruction.

DOES TEENAGE MUSIC HELP IN THE TREATMENT OF DESTRUCTIVITY ?

Adolescent music approaches the questions of destruction. The "high priest" of teenage music which expresses destructivity, the late leader and cult figure of the Doors, Jim Morrison wrote aptly in his rock lyrics dealing with destruction and death :

This is the end,
my beautiful friend
This is the end,
my only friend, the end
I'll never look into your
eyes again... "

The aggressiveness, destructivity, and maladjustment have frequently aroused unresponsive reactions in the adult population. However, we have to bear this in mind that the

destructivity expressed by music is of imaginary nature based on images and not by any means real chaotic violence and destructivity.

It is obvious that it is in connection with music that young people can express strong and furious hatred creatively, and constructively, thus making music an instrument with the help of which one can simultaneously both handle and go through repressed aggressions, the insignificance of life, one's own unworthiness and so on, which seems to be reflected on the "screen" created by music for the others to examine. The creative process linked with music (Lehtonen, 1986b) however, creates simultaneously new standpoints to life giving birth to new meaningfulness and gives it's creator experiences constructing his or her self image and identity.

At it's best, teenage music represents pure psychic energy, which helps young people to get rid of their strong unidentified and conflicting emotions either by composing music or by identifying with it. Music allows the individual creating music or responding to it such psychic changes, which are not possible in any other action.

Music and music interest can then also become a significant and lifelong "generator" of meaningfulness which conmtinuously arouses new meaningful meanings for instance into otherwise desolate world of the young person behaving

in a strongly destructive manner (Lehtonen & Shaughnessy, 1991)

Music is above all, the language of strong emotion, which can be used to strengthen the structures of psyche also at the threat of strong psychic distress and incoherence. (Lehtonen, 1986 a) . When examining composer biographies, one can often notice how many composers have worked nearly in " life distress " as if directed by a strong inner compulsion.

Gustav Mahler represented a tragic human picture, who through his life struggled with his strong and traumatic inner contradictions. Mahler described his creative task by saying among other things :

> " All my life I have written my nine symphonies. It opens out to its smallest details to anyone who can listen... If my life had run peacefully like a brook running across the meadow, I don't think that I would have been able to compose a single note.. "

It is obvious that also Beethoven struggled against strong destructive and chaotic psychic pressures in his compositional work. For him, the composition and composing task was so essential and important that he didn't give it up even at the moment of total deafness.

Robert Schuman was obviously long able to control his traumatic psychotic nature by composing. Equivalent examples abound both in national and foreign light music.

Working with music may be a very significant means to control incoherent, chaotic, and the destructive contents of the mind.

Music is at its best as rich and real as life itself, whose phenomena it actually handles, signals and relects in a symbolic form. The "external" creative performing and listening process of music is always equivalent to the " internal" working task.where a person creating music gives music a "meaning" from his or her own "internal experiences". In musical creative and receiving process, there performs a "self creative" person who with the help of music, tries to create order in his/her incoherence or reach a psychic organization of some higher level.

MUSIC IN THE FIELD OF LIFE

In many theoretical examinations, life has been described as a "field" whose subjective experience and instructions working there rise central factors directing action. On one hand, the individual seems to orient themselves in the "landscape" of his or her own subjective life experience and on the other hand in the "landscape" of objective instructions working in the field.

Similar formalizations are presented by the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (typographic theory on human psyche), a science philosopher Jergen Habermas (Lebenswelt-

construction) and cultural sociologist and sociologist of education, Pierre Bourdieu. The concept of the field is both illustrative and telling when describing an individual's orientation in his/her surroundings.

Kurt Lewin's field theory is a modification of the gestalt theory, which is often called a "cognitive field theory" . The purpose of Lewin's theory (1952) is to examine the concrete behavior of a certain individual at a certain moment or moment of time. This happens with the help of the "life space " concept developed by Lewin. Life space includes all the psychological facts which at a certain momemt affect the individual's behavior. Life space includes the individual and his/her environment such as the individual experiences them at any given situation; individual objectives, and the relations between them.

With the help of life space, we thus describe the subjective psychological situation of the individual. Psychological forces influencing in life space are described with the help of vectors. Especially important in description are individual needs at any given time, interests and objectives as well as the obstacles on their way and an individual historically formed idea of one's own possibilities. Action motivation is greatly based on attaining the objectives and the tension aroused by the obstacles in their way (Miettinen, 1984, p. 56)

Lewin (1952) sees the most important type of learning expressly in the changes of individual cognitive structures. Cognitive structure is a life situation, especially however, concerning individual physical and social environment , an " intellectual idea " divided into different categories. The change and organization of cognitive structure mainly takes place by aiming at balance and higher control and structure. Music seems in many ways to create and redirect goals and aspirations of the reform schoolboys taking part in music therapy. The meaning of music hobby as a "lifelong pleasure giving challenge" may integrate so essentially into their world- and human picture that it starts strongly to change their action also in other fields of life. What is central to the process is the opportunity given by music both to experience life in a balanced way and simultaneously calm down reducing psychic restlessness and contradiction.

The key question is to find meaningfulness and " significance" maintaining life in music, its creation, listening, practice and presentation.

Composer John Cage recently stated in a television interview seen in Finland that he had realized that the ultimate purpose of composition work is just to reach peace of mind. This is also the case in music as a hobby: The quality of music as an endless and constantly changing source of meaning gives its devotee continuously new meaningful

challenges and experiences. Through music we can, in many ways, influence a human psyche in distress having it's own opportunities linked with experiences in inner psyche and at the same time create new orientation schemes.

CAN MUSIC SOLVE CRISES IN " REAL LIFE " ?

The unquestionable result of much music therapy work seems to be that the strong destructive behavior earlier expressed by the boys who had taken part in therapy general aggressiveness and being guilty of different crimes have clearly decreased along with the progress in music therapy work and many times they have even completely stopped during the process. This has happened despite the fact that diminishing the described symptoms has by no means been the goal of music therapy. Many young people we have met in music therapy "afflicted" by violent "inner restlessness" leading to a destructive and chaotic action seems along with the progress of therapy process "bind itself" to music, whose form, volume, and lyrics have started to express them in an artistic form.

It seems that the destructive behavior of the boys taking part in therapy is a symptom of an "insignificant" and meaningless life. Finding significant meaningfulness in music seems to move the focus from desperate acts towards flexible "meaningful space" given by music itself where when confronted with different lifestyles, crises and problems

one can always find both constantly renewable outburst channels and significance.

Through imagination influencing in music , the whole life space is renewed and structured again. At the same time experiencing different, even difficult life situations as well as the objectives directing action and motivation change more balanced and meaningful.

The late, great humanist, master cellist Pablo Casals crystallized the reforming meaning of music in his beautifully poetic aphorism :

"Music expels hatred from those who don't love. For the restless it gives peace, for the crying comfort. Those whose road is blocked will find new paths and those who reject everything will have new certainty and hope."

Symbol reseacher Susan Langer (1951, 1953, 1967) says the same thing when considering the significance of music. Langer states that music organizes, expresses and creates a new structures of consciousness and emotions. According to her, music itself is a symbol of psychic proceess, whose forms extend in principle to all the development stages and shades of experiences in psychic process (Lehtonen, 1988, 1991a) . A person working with music can by using music correctly reorganize, and analyze his/ her own psychic structures, whose historical roots may extend both up to the earliest developmental events and later fates of

development, which the unique symbolic " language " of music can organize and reconstruct.

THE OPPORTUNITIES OF MUSIC IN COMMUNITY WORK

The proper music therapy work is usually meant to relieve already existing problems and treat them. It seems obvious that for instance, in institutional conditions, music can be used to give significant components in constructing the young person's personality and identity. In connection with music therapy process, there is often born a permanent music interest based on spontaneous working whose "significance" seems to influence in any ways also the young person's decision later on in his/her life.

On the other hand, the use of music has not been experimentally tested very much, for instance in the fields of gang and community work.

The matter is both difficult and challenging. On the musical level, "street culture" can be approached with its own conditions and greatly from its own starting points. The wider organization of musical activity is a difficult task and it demands of the worker a very special competence. One has to be given the opportunity for music both through instruments and expert guidance. On the other hand, we have to remember that music can't be "tamed" or subdued to an instrument of socializing interaction. To be real and functioning, mental activity has, in the end, to be based on

young people's own creativity and set of values.
The experiments linked with musical activity in community- and gangwork have been quite unsystematic and few in number. One reason for this may be that there are too few therapeutically aptly oriented musicians having sufficienty mature psyches and equipped with the charisma relevant to the matter. On the other hand, the matter in question may also be the stiffness of administrative bureaucracy. Musical activity requires proper equipment, the acquisition of which is not quite cheap or uncomplicated. Starting the above mentioned activity may also be prevented by the lack of apt persons having sufficiently many sided expertise or the lack of earlier experiments and operation models.

Earlier experiements of the corresponding work have for instance in Turku concentrated among other things on hiking and adventure education with the help of which we have gained encouraging results in co-operation with young people, their parents and authorities.

Adventure education has included for instance, the teaching of mountain climbing. The purpose of this activity has been among other things to give new experiences and an opportunity to dissolve aggressions and tension in socially acceptable ways. The use of music however, deviates from the mentioned objectives so that merely getting enthusiastic about it does nt "dissolve psychic pressures" but the moving and flexible elements being its central quality profoundly

change also the "pressure producing" device itself, the human psyche (Rechardt & Ikonen, 1990) . This means that the effects of change will be directed far-reachingly also to the future.

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